

MEMORANDUM FOR: Landon Kite
White House Office

Executive Registry

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Attached, per your request, is a general summary of how word processing equipment is used in the Agency. Your interests would probably be best served by having the various types of equipment demonstrated to you. I'd be glad to arrange that if you'd like to supplement the demonstrations you've already had from the commercial companies.

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[REDACTED]
Deputy Executive Secretary

Date 11 November 1977

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WORD PROCESSING

Word processing equipment is used in the preparation of reports, correspondence and other documents which require extensive editing and retying as a normal part of the approval mechanism. Some offices use word processors for the preparation of letters which must be sent out as originals to multiple addressees. Several offices forward a duplicate set of magnetic cards along with their reports to a central office where appropriate paragraphs, sentences, or data are extracted to produce a variety of reports for several levels of management, thereby eliminating unnecessary retying. Our publications group makes heavy use of word processing equipment to initiate drafts, make revisions, edit and prepare the final copy. Some equipment has the capability of communicating with the computer and is used as a data entry terminal as well as a word processor. Similarly, offices that prepare copy for publication use a special typing element on their word processors which permits electronic reading by an optical character reader (OCR) and thus provides interface between word processing and printing equipment. Preparation of standard contracts has been expedited by storing standard paragraphs magnetically, calling them up as appropriate and only typing in the variable information. Offices have generally found additional uses once the equipment is installed such as typing routine routing slips, or standard periodic reminders.

Components have reported dramatic reductions in overtime or in backlog of work following installation of word processing equipment, while others are better able to meet critical deadlines and improve on the quality of finished work.

Most of the word processors are used as single (stand-alone) units, or in small groups, to serve specific needs of the users rather than in large centers. We do have some centers, primarily in offices dealing with a heavy workload of publication material. However, these are not called "word processing centers" -- a main reason being the desire to avoid the connotation of "typing pool." Some three years ago a "word processing center" was set up in a large component. It met with a measure of success, but over a period of time experienced difficulties in arranging for corrections because the users were located on several floors, in keeping operators in the center, and in communicating between users and the center. For these reasons, the managers of the center recently decided to decentralize the activity by retaining only a small cluster of keyboards to serve 3 offices and dispersing other keyboards to bring word processing capability closer to the units which initiate requirements.

The equipment in use is representative of what is available in the marketplace, and includes magnetic card, tape, cassette, and disc equipment. Visual display text editors (cathode ray tube) were introduced into the Agency some three years ago. Some of the equipment is rented, some is purchased. Rental provides an opportunity to evaluate the equipment in the office environment and also allows flexibility to upgrade to more advanced technology when that becomes available and desirable to use. In order to ensure maximum utilization of the equipment, sharing by several operators or with other offices is encouraged.